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with the Respect
of the Author*

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

ON THE

LIFE, DEEDS AND CHARACTER

OF

~~SIR~~ MATHEW CRADOCK.

BY DAVID ROBERTS.

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

During the latter part of the reign of James 1st, and the beginning of that of Charles 1st, (while Strafford and Laud had the control of affairs in England) events transpired, which ultimately resulted in the permanent planting of the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay.

The arrival of the Mayflower is an epoch in history, and especially in the history of this continent.

So also may the transfer of the government of Massachusetts from London, with its charter, under John Winthrop, be regarded as another epoch in American History.

Both events are and ever will be memorable. The Rock of Plymouth has alike inspired the pen of history and tongue of the orator. The 101 persons, who landed at Plymouth, seeking, under Brewster, an asylum in the wilderness, where they could escape from the persecution consequent upon the reformation, and worship God freely, suffered as only martyrs for opinions' sake and the freedom of conscience can suffer.

The Plymouth Landing preceded in time if not in importance the transfer of the charter of King Charles 1st; which last, as an historical event, has become conspicuous above most others, as it has led naturally to the erection in America of an Independent Republican Government.

A survey of the circumstances attending this act, and the particular instruments by which it was brought about, cannot fail to be of interest, if dealt with in a manner befitting their intrinsic importance.

Religious intolerance had driven Rev. John Robinson and his followers into exile from England, first to Holland and afterward a portion of them to America.

In this country, the great plague of 1617 had so diminished

the numbers of the native Indians who had heretofore roamed through our fields and forests, as to render the planter's new home here measurably safe and secure.

Toil, danger, disease and other exposures, were to be endured; but the courage, spirit and enthusiasm of the adventurers proved equal to all emergencies. Conant, Palfrey, Balch, Woodbury and Trask were at Cape Ann, before even Endicott was sent over by the London Company. Abandoned by Rev. John Lyford (who had returned to Virginia,) all but Conant were about giving up in despair. But Conant's strong will and determination persuaded and detained his desponding companions. Counsell'd by Rev. John White to hold out for aid and supplies, they bravely awaited the next tidings from England; and the opportune arrival of Endicott infused into them new life and hope; with and under him a local government was framed which answered every purpose, until Winthrop came along with the original charter.

Then was planted that political seed, the growth of which from blossom to bud and from ^{blossom} ~~bud~~ to fruit, all may now trace historically in the recently published Records of Massachusetts. By whose hand that seed was selected and whose agency at London was paramount in wrapping it up in the folds of that Parchment, (the charter of King Charles 1st) is the particular subject which I incline to discuss for a while and to which I invite your attention.

The original patent was granted to Sir Henry Roswell and others—three of whom sold out—and, through the influence of Rev. J. White, a company was formed and a government was organized (consisting of a Governor, Deputy Governor and 18 assistants)—and Mathew Cradock, a London Merchant, of vast resources, great business capacity, and ardent and enthusiastic in the pursuit of any enterprise undertaken by him, was the first selected chief and Governor of the Company at London. He it was, who selected John Endicott (his cousin by inter-marriage) as the trusted agent and Governor of the Colony to reside in New England.

He first "himself conceived" and submitted to the company the proposition to transfer the charter to New England. He gave way for the choice of a new Governor and was of course greatly instrumental in selecting and delegating Winthrop as the local Governor under the charter, to reside in New England, and ultimately by his agent and men (in conjunction with the Governor) in founding, on the Mystic River, the ancient town of Medford.

With these preliminary remarks, and with only fragmentary scraps at my command, I will now endeavor to present the result of all that I have gleaned, illustrative of the origin, life, pursuits and character of Mathew Cradock.

He was of an old English family. Originally the name was supposed to be Caradoc. His genealogy is traceable back to the year 1446, to John Cradock 1st, who married Jane Dorrington, through a John 2d, Richard, Thomas 1st, Thomas 2d, William and his father Mathew. The father was born 1563, married Dorothy Greenway (of Dorsetshire) and had two sons, our Mathew and Samuel, who was a clerk at Thistleton, in Rutland Co., had the entire confidence of his brother and was made his residuary legatee by will.

Governor Cradock was twice married; first to Damaris, daughter of Richard Winne, of Salop, by whom he had a daughter, also named Damaris, baptised November 1st, 1623, and who was afterward married to Thomas Andrews, a leather seller of London.

His second wife was Rebecca (daughter of Thomas Jordan, a London merchant) by whom he had three children, Mathew, Thomas and Mary, who were severally baptized in 1632, 1634 and 1637. These and the time of his daughter's baptism are the only positive dates we can find, except the date of his will, which was November 9th, 1640.

Taking these dates and that of his father's birth, (1563,) we are only able to infer that his age, when we first find him, a character in life and a marked personage in history (and then,

1634, a rich, leading London merchant) was about 30, or, as nearly as I can by hypothesis arrive at the truth, between 25 and 40 years of age.

He had also a sister Sawyer; but how a sister, whether his own or by marriage, neither conjecture nor the fragments of family history yet discovered have enabled me to decide. At all events, she is spoken of in his will as having largely shared his affection and esteem, and so provided for as to be placed beyond actual want in the world. No mention is made of her in the published genealogical tables, though she is named in the Governor's will. Her daughter (Dorothy) is also a legatee and her other children. So then, the Governor, his brother Samuel and sister (Sawyer) were all of the Governor's immediate family.

Nor does it appear that, at the time of making his will, any of his children were of age or married, or that the three children by his second wife were even then living. Damaris alone is named, and she was then 17 years of age, and unless by her, there were no immediate descendants of the Governor himself; and of course the name of Cradock is borne only by collateral branches of the family.

His brother, Samuel, left sons; one of whom was afterward Rector of North Cadbury, in the County of Somersett, and succeeded to the Wickham Brook estate.

A notion has existed that the Governor died about 1644. This I deem erroneous, for reasons which I will state:

In 1639, 2 (5) Mathew Cradock conveys to Thomas Mayhew " $\frac{1}{2}$ water mill in Watertown."

1640, he was chosen a member of Parliament.

1640, November 3, Parliament was assembled.

1640, June 29, M. C. takes from Thomas Dexter, "mortgage of farm in Lynn."

1641, April 26, M. C. conveys messuage in Mystic to Josias Dawston.

1640, November 9, M. C. made his will.

1642, September 2, Rebecca Cradock takes conveyance of "9 acres in Watertown," from Robert Saltoustaill.

Same date, Rebecca C., executrix of M. C.'s last will, &c., takes "mortgage of house in Lynn," from Thomas Dexter.

1644, March 1, Richard Glover and his wife Rebecca *execute an indenture*.

1645, February 12, Richard Glover and his wife Rebecca, constitute Nicholas Davison their attorney.

1646, December 30, N. Davison as att'y, for R. G. and his wife, releases "farm and ware in Lynn," to Richard Leader, for undertakers of the Iron Works.

1647, 18 (1) N. Davison, att'y to "Mrs. Rebecca Cradock, alias Glover, sole executrix," &c., of M. Cradock, grants to Thos. Mayhew 1000 acres Martin's Vineyard, and 500 do in Watertown.

1650, June 6, N. Davison, att'y for Mrs. Rebecca Cradock, alias Glover, grants house, &c., in Marblehead, to Wm. Walton.

1652, June 2, Rebecca Whitecott, wife of Benjamin W., D. D., demises to Edward Collins $\frac{1}{2}$ Medford estate, for 50 years, for £120, payable at the house of Francis Archer, Cheapside, London:—one half June 3rd, 1653, the other one half June 3rd 1654; and Wm. Crowther, Esq., Thomas Jordan, merchant, (her father) Thomas Horton, D. D., and John Jolliffe, merchant, appointed her trustees before her intermarriage with Dr. Benjamin Whitecott, join in the demise.

In the list of members of Parliament, for 1640, against the name of Mathew Cradock, is this entry—"deceased 1640."

This would seem to be conclusive against the notion of his decease in 1644; and if Cobbett's Parliamentary History be in this respect an accurate transcript of the House Journal, then he must have died prior to 25th March, 1641. But unfortunately the conveyance to Josias Dawston, April 26th, 1641, to be found recorded in the Suffolk Registry of Deeds, made by Cradock himself, and not as usual by his attorney, and signed with his own name, is quite incompatible with this hypothesis, and so obscurity must still hang upon the precise period of his decease.

This much however seems logically deducible from the above dates and transactions—that Governor Cradock died after the year 1640, and before September 2nd, 1642, when conveyances were made to "*Mrs. Rebecca Cradock, executrix, &c.*"

This phraseology, the Governor's prior decease, and lapse of time sufficient to enable the widow to probate the will, and take upon herself the administration of her husband's estate, all strengthen and confirm the position.

Thus much for the date of his decease—and the foregoing dates will enable others (if disposed) to pursue the subject farther, especially if they shall have occasion or opportunity to get access to the Parish Records of St. Swithen's, London.

Of Richard Glover, nothing seems to be known. Dr. Whitchcott is spoken of by Tillotson as an accurate and thorough scholar. He sided with the Parliament against the King, and in the changes consequent upon Cromwell's success, he was appointed the head of King's College, thus displacing its former master, Dr. Collins.

Here let us turn and contemplate the situation, condition and business in life, of Governor Cradock. Educated for mercantile pursuits, having himself served an apprenticeship in Broad Street, London, pursuing his calling with assiduity and with a devotion, too, which is always an earnest of success—in middle life discovering every symptom of having acquired ample wealth, with his house in the city and seat in the country, ships to fit out, cargoes to buy, wages to pay, instructions to write, masters and officers to select, books to balance, clerks to oversee, merchandise in England to look after, lands in New England to improve and cultivate, money to furnish for his own business and money also to advance for the Company, with man servants and maid servants to direct, he still finds time to preside at the Company's Courts in London,—takes part in their discussions and engages with heart and bravery in what time has proved to be one of the noblest of colonizing enterprises. In this project, the Company had to feel its way and always under Cradock's lead, both in council and disbursements; for in whatever he engaged, it was always with his whole heart. He was ever ready with men or money, with materials or assurances, as partner or on his own hook, to ship for the Company or himself, to furnish or buy supplies, assorted or other cargoes;

if the Company were at a dead-lock in its finances, he would advance the requisite funds ; when the Company could send but two ships, he would himself send a third ; if the Company could not pay seamen's wages, he would ; instead of permitting delay, his mercantile mind secured dispatch ; that the ships (being at great cost) would not return empty, he wrote to instruct Endicott to secure in advance, beaver, fish, sumac, sarsaparilla, timber and other commodities, for return cargoes : and also 300 firkins of good sturgeon, which (if well cured) would secure the voyage.

Every resource, shift, expedient and contrivance of a mercantile, administrative and diplomatic mind even, he, on some occasion displayed. When a larger ship (the Eagle, afterward named the Arabella,) was wanted, beside his share of the joint stock, he himself subscribes for 1-8th on his own private account. In general subscriptions, when others wrote for £20, up to £100, he would write for £150, and so was it in almost every emergency of the early proprietors. If any gulf of embarrassment or of difficulty was to be bridged over, he was ready to build the bridge or to take the lead in building it. Instant in season and out of season, at all times and with every variety of aid to promote the "main aim and purpose" of the plantation, and if possible to christianize the natives. These his great tasks and risks, immense liabilities and heavy disbursements were assumed and borne cheerfully, and unhesitatingly ; and accordingly the records show that his many services were in due time appreciated and properly recognized by those most benefitted by them, and therefore the more capable of appreciating them.

Thus the Company in its second general letter say—"As our Governor hath engaged himself *beyond all expectation*, in this business, not only in his particular by great sums disbursed for the general, to supply the wants thereof, so our desire is that you endeavor to give all furtherance and friendly accommodation to his agents and servants there."

So in voting him laud on the Mystic River, opposite the Ten Hills Farm of Governor Winthrop. So later in our colonial

history, when was voted to his widow, (Rebecca Whichcott), £679.6.4, which appeared to be a balance due to the Governor in his life time, and which was ultimately thus paid as some return for his *heavy disbursements*.

Moreover the many and great services of Cradock were rendered to the plantation in its infancy, when aid was most needed. He selected his "loving friend and cousin," John Endicott, as the pioneer and first local Governor of the Company. He first proposed and counselled the transfer of the charter. He concurred in the appointment of Winthrop, and consented to serve as one of a committee to settle the accounts. When Winthrop appeared and presided at the Company's Courts, in London, Cradock joined them in the subordinate capacity of assistant. Pride he undoubtedly had, but no false pride. In this respect, he was a marvel of self-abnegation and devotion to duty. He could readily change position, but with a change of position there came no change of devotion to duty. He continued still the same constant friend of the enterprise. Nothing seemed to swerve him from his main purpose; as principal or subordinate, he remained still constant and true. Other men, of probity and worth, also rendered many and great services. Conant, Rev. John White, Endicott, Winthrop, Dudley, Saltonstall, Johnson, Humphrey and others, were conspicuous and efficient in our early history. Their agency is fully appreciated and must ever be historically recognized. But honoring, applauding and appreciating them all, conceding to their services, all and severally the full measure of merit and applause which the most exacting family friendship or love of historical truth can claim or desire, yet, without disparagement to any or all, could the whole extent of the risks, services and sacrifices of MATHEW CRADOCK be fully known, could his private and public letters and correspondence be brought before the public, could all that was said and done by him for the Company by himself in London, or through his agent (Nicholas Davison) here be put upon the page of history,—a flood of light would

be shed upon an otherwise somewhat obscure passage in our early history, and the conjecture might be hazarded, (if not a confident belief entertained), that Cradock would, by general consent, be recognized as the Father of this Colony; and it would not be that others merit was less, but because Cradock's ability was greater. All served faithfully, according to their several ability, but Cradock with like fidelity and according to his greater wealth and abundance.

Meanwhile, other events transpired. Time wore away and England was being drained by the constant emigration to America. The first Stewart (James 1st), by the despotism of Buckingham in ecclesiastical affairs, had driven the band of Puritans, under John Robinson, to Leyden; the second Stewart (Charles 1st), had adopted the same despotic rule in his government and had pressed into his service that ferocious minion of power, Archbishop Laud. Hence, to check emigration and oppress the Colonies, the passenger list was required to be exhibited to the Lord Treasurer and Privy Council, and their approbation of it was a prerequisite, before any ship bound to America could be licensed to depart.

Before the transfer of the charter to New England, the colonists at Plymouth and Cape Ann had suffered much. Though the plague of 1617 had greatly diminished the number of native Indians and the great Sachem had died, yet his Squaw Sachem and three sons, George, John and James still survived and ruled as Sagamores, and could muster 15 or 20 men, whereas formerly they could rally 100 or 200. The colonists were furnished with arms and instructed to use them in *self-defence*—and they were instructed also not to be over confident in their security, but to remember Plymouth, and rely somewhat upon the rifle.

February 16, 1628, was written Governor Cradock's letter to his cousin John Endicott. This probably reached New England by some fishing craft. The first and second general letters of the Company bear date April 17 and May 28, of the same year. Both referred to the Governor's and were written at

leisure by Rev. John White or Counsellor Whyte, on both of whom the Company much leaned for counsel. But the Governor's letter preoccupied the ground—more brief and less minute, yet equally comprehensive and exhausting all the chief topics—written with dispatch but touching every subject and adopted in the Company's two letters as part and parcel of them. And here again we see the master spirit. In the first patent, Sir Henry Roswell appeared, but it was only in name. Cradock's lot and part in the business, when he appeared, was not only a name but a reality. Cradock's name was equivalent to action; and wherever that appeared, *there* was action. That first dispatch of his to Endicott was significant of his overshadowing agency and acknowledged supremacy in the Company affairs, and of the unbounded confidence of his associates in his judgment and capacity.

✓ This letter is dated "From my house, Swithen's lane, near London Stone, Feb. 16, 1628, *Stilo Angliæ*,"—and where is that lane? Look at the map of London and you'll find, not far from London Bridge, the very spot, where 228 years ago, that letter was first penned by its author.

In a little curved street, within the Roman walls of the old city of London proper, between King Williams' and Cannon Streets, with the Exchange, Mansion House and Bank of England in sight or hard by, Lombard, Broad and Threadneedle streets at the North, the Tower a few squares East, and St. Paul's Church not many more squares West, (a lane, where in modern days the Rothschilds pay out their foreign loan dividends and by their purse control the policy of the nations and the destiny of the people of Europe,) in that semi-circular obscure lane, Cradock's brain first conceived this letter to Endicott (saved as by a miracle to the present day) which embodied the hopes and mirrored the policy of future millions of men.

✓ St. Swithen's Lane indeed! so typical of toil and treasure two centuries ago, and now so famous for its more than princely banking inhabitants, was well worth the search it cost me to find it on the map. In this vicinity was passed the early and later life

of Cradock. In Broad street he served his apprenticeship ; in Swithen's Lane was his house when Governor of the New England plantation ; and there he elaborated his great ideas and poured out with lavish liberality his exhaustless treasures, to found in the wilderness beyond the waters, a future nationality which might rival in wealth and defy in power the oldest governments of Europe.

The settlement of Virginia, the Carolinas, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire and Plymouth, in point of time preceded that of Massachusetts, while Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware followed. The transfer of the government (with the charter,) an idea conceived by Cradock himself, operated powerfully to promote the progress of New England in all the arts which tend to spread civilization and organize society. This, after all, the crowning act of his life, stands out in bold relief. It brought Winthrop and Saltonstall and Dudley and Nowell and Johnson and other men of mark to our shores. These were the early pioneers and patriots. What a picture the historic limner could produce of this group of worthies !

Endicott, who had nobly led the way and joined Conant and others (already here) was also a patriot in the colonial cause. Practically supplanted by Winthrop, he still, though returned to the ranks, served as faithfully in the capacity of assistant, as he had in that of Governor *de jure et de facto*. He submitted with grace to his year's suspension like a true law-abiding and order-loving citizen. At the end of the year, he was at once restored to the post of assistant, and afterwards many times elected Governor.

So with Dudley, who was sometime Deputy, then Assistant, then Governor ; then again assistant ; and so with Bellingham, Haynes and others ;—all patriotic and devoted men—true, in all stations and under all circumstances, to the best interests of the Colony and the spread of true religion. No change of devotion followed any change of position.

And these were selected and approved men of Cradock. His

knowledge of men seems to have been equal to his judgment and capacity for business. His plans, so well matured, were ultimately well carried out by reliable men and means, discreetly and wisely selected. This, to the earnest seeker after historical truth, imports a praise in behalf of Cradock of no insignificant value. His means were well adapted to his ends, rendering him eminently worthy of a place in history. By his labors and liberality, a people was planted here; (where agriculture, manufactures and commerce have since flourished;) whose military and naval power have astonished Europe, and whose territorial possessions have spanned the western continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean.

The will of Governor Cradock furnishes us also a key to his character. Its main purposes are benevolence, justice and regard for personal and family friends. It may be found recorded at length in the Middlesex Records, B. 2, L. 322.

But, though he never came to New England, he is the recognized founder of the ancient town of Medford. There he started the fisheries, had his agent, built a bridge, impaled a park, erected what is called "the Garrison House or Fort," now standing, employed shipwrights and built vessels.

At Ipswich and Marblehead he also had fishing establishments.

In 1629, six shipwrights, two coopers and cleavers of timber and two gardeners were sent to be paid and employed "at halves" by Cradock and the Company.

In 1630, he sent over Richard Waterman "to supply good venison."

In 1633, the General Court granted to him and Winthrop "the Wear at Mystic."

In 1634, his house was burnt at Marblehead, where he employed Allerton and others with eight boats in fishing.

In the same year, the General Court, on the 4th March, voted "all the ground, as well upland as meadow, lying and being between the land of Mr. Nowell and Mr. Wilson on the East, and the partition betwixt Mistick bounds on the West:

bounded with Mistick river on the South and the rocks on the North, is granted to Mr. Mathew Cradock, merchant, to enjoy to him and his heirs forever."

1635, General Court paid him £55.

1635, March 3, Voted, former grant to M. Cradock "shall extend one mile into the country from the river side in all places," making 3500 acres.

All cattle were imported by him and were the joint property of him and the company, and so of the ship building materials.

1638, another 1000 acres were granted to him.

1641, June 2, John Oldham's 500 acres were "to be set out" to M. Cradock.

As the founder of Medford, he is long to be remembered. Memorials still exist of the man and merchant. After the "Wear at Mistick" was granted to him, he had there early his agent, employed men in fishing and ship building, was fined for their neglect in training, built a bridge over the Mystick, built his house, and impaled a park; all which look very much like a contemplated future residence here, though he never came.

Had Cradock (between the years 1623 and 1641, within the only eighteen years of which we can find any trace of him,) crossed the Atlantic and visited this western wilderness, how would he have been greeted by the people of that age! The Colonists of those days knew full well the extent and value of his services. Nothing would have been conjecture. His name and deeds would have been fresh and familiar to the living of that day; as the old chief of their courts and councils in London, he would have been received with open hearts and arms, by Endicott, and Winthrop, and Dudley, and Johnson, and Nowell, and Humphrey, and all then living, and who had acted with him as assistant or otherwise in the old country.

It would not have been necessary to grope among the musty files of neglected history, for a fragmentary scrap here and there, to revive his name; but the living memories of that age and generation would have supplied all deficiencies and filled up

and rounded to a perfect fulness the history, character and man. Mathew Cradock would have been presented to us on a canvass, and by artists which would have left nothing doubtful as to his proportions, name and history.

We could then have seen and known what manner of man he was ; where and when he was born ; with whom he served his apprenticeship in Broad street, whether it was with a merchant, skinner or leather dresser ; what was the amount of his wealth, and how he acquired it ; whether he served in the Parliament of 1640, or died before taking his seat ; what family he left behind him and their history to this day ; how much he risked and lost to serve the Plantation ; what he gained by fishing or lost by ship-building ; who served him at Medford, Ipswich and Marblehead, and with what success ; why the General Court paid him £55 in 1635, and left £679 6 4, unpaid, to be claimed by his widow ; why his rates were forborne "till the next ship arrives ;" what, up to 1640, he did in England ; how much he admired or abhorred the government of the Stewarts, under Buckingham, Strafford and Laud's administration ; whether or not with John Hampden, he resisted payment of *ship money*, and opposed the tonnage and poundage tax ; what he said and how he bore himself before the privy council ; whether he ever contemplated a visit to New England or cast carelessly his bread upon the waters, never intending to follow, but leave the seed planted by Endicott and Winthrop, under the Charter, to fructify and germinate as it might in this goodly heritage of thrift and freedom.

These and many other things might, I say, have been made matter of history and not left to conjecture, had Governor Cradock visited our shores. Fortunate will it be, if this or other publications, shall arrest the attention of investigators of biographical or historical truth, and turn their minds and thoughts to making further explorations, so that valuable researches may yet be made and desirable results attained.

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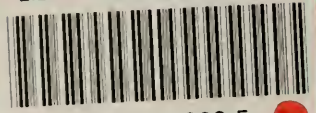
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